

RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
In-Person at Recreation Office, Old Orchard Road
October 13, 2021

Present in-person: Ed Casarella, Brent Warren, Christine LaBranche, Christine Mickle (Director), Jacob Congel (Asst. Director), Stephanie Komich (Program Coordinator)

Present on zoom: Allie Davis, Lauren Barker (Economic Development Planner), Karen Strauss (Chair, T-Time Committee)

Meeting called to order at 5:32 PM.

Minutes amended by Ed Casarella – under New Business – for clarification, the sentence “Housing fund is replenished up front – conservation now wants this same set-up – they are asking for a half million dollars to set-up this fund” was a CPC Update (this was not noted in minutes).

Motion made by Brent Warren to approve last month's minutes as amended; Allie Davis seconded.

Correspondence:

Email from Erica O'Reilly, Treasurer of Nauset Together We Can (NTWC) – who is the managing group of the regional Finch Skatepark – was read and discussed. Christine M. gave an update on the skatepark and explained that the current location of the skatepark is being considered as a potential site for the new Orleans Fire Station. NTWC is working closely with the Town of Orleans, the Nauset School District and OFD to ensure that the skatepark will be relocated if the new station is built where park currently is.

Christine L. requested the Commission send a letter of support for the park to the Nauset School District. Commission agreed – letter will be written and on next month's agenda for approval.

Appointments:

Karen Strauss and Lauren Barker gave a T-Time Committee update:

Karen outlined the process the T-Time Committee took for how they came to a decided use for the property – they took recommendations, had a market survey, a committee survey and used the Town's strategic plan. From the market survey they narrowed it down to a draft of what the committee is recommending. Their recommendation will be for a Community Center anchored by the COA and the Recreation Department. Maybe a pool – more research and outreach needed. Open green space, mixed senior and workforce housing and pop-up space for artists rounds out their use for the T-Time property.

For the Town Center property – the idea is to keep the existing businesses, add medical offices and retail and have housing above these.

For the current COA property – housing – affordable, senior and workforce housing.

All 3 properties would look and feel like Eastham. Need to look at traffic, wastewater, and environmental impacts. All 3 would be mixed use, not single use.

Karen spoke on the next steps that the committee was taking – there would be under 40 focus groups and from there the committee would look at all information gathered and all public comments and would then narrow it down and have a recommendation to the Select Board.

In the new year, the master plan would be developed – this plan will be more detailed. This will be the "how" phase – how the property is used, how the property feels. During this phase it will be very important for the Recreation Commission to be vocal. No architectural renderings will be finalized here but more conceptual ideas of land use and what buildings will look like. The process will involve starting with the needs and then construct around those.

Karen and Lauren then asked for questions, comments from the Rec Commission:

Ed C stated that Rec needs a home!

Chrissy L stated there needs to be something/somewhere for the youth in town – where they can hang out and/or play – they need a space!

Brent W stated that it was time for the town to step-up and take care of the youth!

Karen again mentioned that Rec would need to coexist with the COA.

Both Ed and Brent said yes, we can. We operate at different times and it makes sense to have a shared building with a gym!

Ed asked, "do the seniors not want this?" and then said that if they don't it was going to be very difficult to sell a community center to the taxpayers.

Lauren discussed that the COA is embarking on their own strategic process – they are going to survey their seniors and identify needs, and this includes 55+. Lauren mentioned that there are strong community ties to the current COA building and they want to be sensitive to that and another option may be to keep the building for certain events.

Ed asked when they would present to the Select Board and when would it get to the design phase – the phase of the "what's" – what is inside and what is outside?

Lauren was hopeful that RFPs would go out at the end of the month and get to work in January. Maybe it would be one firm or a combination of firms but that the team would be a blend of architects, municipal building professionals and community center professionals.

Ed asked if the T-Time Committee's role has expanded to the other 2 properties – is this a package of all properties?

Both Lauren and Karen spoke that it could be a possibility but that the Select Board is aware of the T-Time Committee's work on the T-Time property, and they hope to get a commitment from the BOS. They also mentioned that the project is in sync with the BOS housing goals.

Conversation regarding the proximity to Willy's and concerns with that. Lauren mentioned that the owner of Willy's has been kept apprised of everything and has been present at meetings. Lauren said that the town is looking to fill in program gaps and not necessarily duplicate what Willy's already has. The discussion also involved talk/concern about the pool at Willy's and that there was no longer a gym at Willy's. Middle School and High School kids need a space also – a place to play indoor basketball and Willy's doesn't have this – and a space/place to just hang-out.

The Rec Commission also felt that Willy's is not affordable for many of our families.

Brent stated that the T-Time property was a great opportunity for the town, and it would be shameful to not do as much as possible with it!

Lauren said that the T-Time Committee is recommending a community center as a top item on their list.

Ed feels there's a misconception out there of what rec can do – without our own building he stated how rec is at the mercy of others – we are tenants at will and the first to be bumped when the "owners" of the building need the space (IE, make-up concert at EES but rec supposed to have a basketball game).

The library is over capacity – they don't have enough space to fulfill outside requests. Same as NRHS.

Lauren asked for an updated list of rec needs and wants and for rec to have a hand-out available at the Halloween event.

Ed thanked Karen and Lauren for everything they have done and for coming to our meeting.

Director's Report:

Beaches had a record year! Despite rainy days & short-staffed - beach revenue was over \$600,000.00!

Fall programs are up and running and all have great participant numbers. 100+ participants in total!

Spell Casters is a science-based club for K & 1, we have 18 spellcasters who are creating potions and making wands and soaps and bath bombs!

Bike & Hike has been a staple fall program for years now and still well-received!

Last month there was concern that the Lower Cape Soccer League may not run but happy to say it is and that Eastham has a team at every level in the league. We have both Wellfleet and Brewster children participating with us on two different teams (those towns were not able to have teams at a couple levels). We also have a large K and 1 group with 20+ participants plus a 2nd grade group with 12 participants and one of our favorites – Little Kickers (4 & 5 year-olds) is also running.

Events:

Halloween will be Sunday, October 24th on the Windmill Green. Stephanie explained set-up and how the afternoon will go. She asked Rec Commissioners to be judges for both the pumpkin and costume contests. Trophies have been ordered and we have lots of local businesses who will be there to participate and hand-out candy, etc.

The Duck Race will be Sunday November 14th at 9:30am. Jacob stated that this was our 15th annual duck race! He explained how the race would go and asked Commissioners to help.

Christmas/Holiday events are still in the works – Wiley Park lighted drive-thru display may not happen due to the difficulty with power. Rec will decorate inside the Windmill and open it for the Chambers event. Hope to have Santa event planned soon.

Old Business:

Conservation Commission:

Ed attended their meeting, and they are still waiting for state agencies to respond to the driving on the beach request. The Conservation Commission mirrors the Recreation Commissions concerns regarding safety especially at sunset and during morning rec yoga. The Chair of the Conservation Commission is trying to work out a solution with the shellfish group.

Field of Dreams:

- 1.) Dugouts are in process! They look great and CC Tech is doing a fabulous job!
- 2.) Staff currently working on putting together scope of work and details for poured-in-place surfacing RFP's.

Wiley Park:

Bid has been awarded to Green Acres – this is the same company who installed the playground pieces at the Field of Dreams. Town is excited to work with them again. Equipment has been purchased.

T-Time:

Rec Department working with Lauren for temporary use of the space – in Spring 2022.

Community Preservation Committee:

No applications received by the committee yet. Maybe an open space request for \$500, 000.00 but there is \$1.9 million available.

New Business:

See above regarding minutes.

Next meeting is set for November 9th at 5:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM, motion made by Brent Warren, seconded by Barbara Komins